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"Blessings On Thee, Little Man-"

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At 12 noon on a Thursday I got the job offer. At 8:30 am on the following Monday, I taught six hours of forestry classes, including a four hour lab on heavy equipment. Send your cards and letters care of this magazine if you think you have ever been as challenged on the job as I was that first day. I recall hearing one of the speakers in the "Women in Forestry" seminar at ISU relate her feelings upon finding herself unable to winch her vehicle out of a remote ditch. At least she didn't have 45 young men in their late teens and early 20's come upon the scene thinking it might be sporting to see if they could keep her stuck. You might think that I would have been relieved when the full time instructor returned from Desert Storm in eight short/long weeks. I was thrilled that they kept me on. I taught one forestry class per quarter for the next two years. I won a grant to create a public forestry presentation exploring a special timbered land form indigenous to the area (Carolina Bays). I began to play up the undergraduate minor I received at ISU. I was accepted into the Master of Business Administration degree program at the University of North Carolina. I began to teach a Human Relations course for foresters at SCC. I took a course in computer software and became addicted. I took on a computer class for forestry and recreation students. I taught canoeing trips. I tried to make myself indispensable. I rejoined SAF and joined the NC forestry Association. By this time I did have a full time teaching contract but only half of it was forestry classes. I was not the advisor for the forestry students and I did not run the program. At this point, the full time forestry instructor decided to retire early. I got the job.

I am now the sole forestry instructor for one of three forest technician programs in the state of North Carolina. Enrollment is the highest it has ever been. The largest pulp and paper mill in the world is just to the east. The largest contiguous pine plantation in the world is in my district. The oldest trees (Bald Cypress) east of the Mississippi are on the Black River where I canoe. I am hour from the beach and six hours from the mountains. I believe I fell into something good. I could stay here thirty years and never run out of things to do.

Was the situation simply fortuitous this time? I don't think so. For the first time in my forestry career I knew what it was like to pursue a forestry job through determination and long hard work. Hours of heartfelt talks with my husband and hours of prayer inspired my efforts. God held out a present for me and I will never forget it.

"Blessings On Thee, Little Man —"

By George Wilhelm

"How did you get to where you are today?" is a conundrum presented for consideration and clarification. The answer is that I have no idea, except that I have been the recipient of many blessings along the way, which supported dedication to the task at hand and a "fruit bearing" attitude in all things. Basically that covers it, but read on.

I attended Iowa State when it seemed the goal was to take the Junior Forester's Exam on graduation, hoping to pass in pursuit of an appointment in

the Forest Service as a Junior Forester at a salary of \$2000 per year. Bear in mind, that was not bad in 1937, not bad at all.

However, I had in mind 1957 and beyond. Then came George Hartman to the faculty out of private industry and he lent considerable support to my thinking. Blessing number one.

Jobs in private industry were scarce in those days but good friend George, came up with two prospects, one of which was R.S. Bacon Veneer Company in Chicago where I had sworn never to live. Not only was the pay (40¢ per hour) better than the only alternative, but I visualized the business to be very interesting with good potential. So I went to work for Joseph F. Mertes, President. In due course, this turned out to be blessing number two.

Then came to pass blessing number three, a supportive wife who would “hang in there” for 57 years and be willing to “bet the farm” when necessary.

Now, retrospect sometimes breeds tolerance and has the advantage of reflecting the whole picture. However, I have to say Joe gave me many bad moments in 26 years, but every time I considered leaving, as others did, something went awry. Blessing number four. However, on the other hand, I have always had to recognize that Joe was very tolerant of my ideas, some of which did not turn out to be exactly brilliant. As an employer, I have tried to apply this philosophy without the “bad moments”.

Robert S. Bacon started the Company in 1898. He sold it before World War I to Mr. Scott and, upon his death salesman Joseph F. Mertes purchased the company in 1929 and encountered The Great Depression which he survived.

I tried to make myself “indispensable” as soon as possible and during World War II we were cutting aircraft and marine veneer. Joe never asked me to do it, but in one year I worked 364 long days watching two shifts and giving attention to plant and equipment development. Not much had been done in the Veneer Industry and there was a wide open invitation to innovation. That might be considered dedication to the task at hand, but I liked the business and opportunity was obvious. Blessing number four.

Post World War II years were good and also supported some more misadventures along with considerable growth and production advancement.

The time came when Joe wished to sell the company. Buyers were not standing in line. Finally, in desperation (sorry to say), he agreed to let me “have a shot at it”. Blessing number five.

Then in 1963 we took the helm and, in due course, nephew James McCracken graduated from Iowa State and “took to the veneer business like a duck takes to water”. Blessing number six. I might add here that I hope I have treated any of his “misadventures” with at least as much tolerance as I enjoyed.

So here we are, approaching the century mark. It has indeed been a great ride, rough spots and all, and I hope I have been of some comfort to all the passengers,—an important factor.

A blessing, good luck, good fortune,—call it what you will. In a football game they say you make your own breaks, and so it may be, but this follows dedication to the task at hand.

Along with the major blessings, to me came apparently an abundance of guidance at almost every fork in this road of life. That is essential and only to be hoped for.

In retrospect, I should have terminated with paragraph one.

George Wilhelm '37

Lately

By Patrick M. Gibbons

May 1993. I screamed, "It is done!" In a moment I was actually hoping to purge my mind of all knowledge and experience. That "moment" passed quickly. I did not "do" the past four years for nothing.

After graduation it was my intention to relocate to the twin cities. I needed a job. Urban forestry was one of my interests and since I would be living in a metropolitan area, it made sense. I dilly-dallied around until I found myself signing a lease to rent a house. I still had no job and had to act fast, as my checking account was drowning in emptiness. Looking up "tree", in the Minneapolis yellow pages, I called the first company that popped up, Arborists, under "A". I talked to a paging service and left my Waterloo phone number. The next morning I received a call from the manager of the Arborists, saying he was looking for someone with a forestry degree. We set up an interview and shortly afterwards, I was hired. Thank God!

The Arborists is a tree care business. Our services include: tree and shrub pruning, Dutch elm disease prevention, fertilization, and cabling.

Trees and shrubs often need pruning to:

- ameliorate construction damage
- remove deadwood
- remove crossovers and other
- "problem" branches

remove branches that are aesthetically unattractive or those having negative effects on the tree's growth pattern

prune away from other trees, wires, buildings, and other urban features

We fertilize trees to:

alleviate construction damage (we can also aerate these trees)

help trees cope with stresses related to pollution, disease, and insect problems

There are several large elm (American and Red or Slippery) trees left in the cities. By injecting them every two to three years with Arbortect 20-S, systemic fungicide, we can prevent the disease.

Cabling is done to highly valued trees in order to prevent the tree or a major branch system from splitting apart at a weakened crotch.

These services can be reported on with much greater detail, but I wanted to give an overview of what we do. There are a few other services, but these are the major ones.

I have seen the business from the bottom up. Dragging and chipping brush to consultation and sales. And though the dragging and chipping of brush has typically been my least favorite, it has rendered me fully aware of how the business works.

In order to do a job with any amount of heart, one must adopt a personal philosophy to be abided by within one's own moral code. I have been developing a philosophy and have even been trying to incorporate it into my dealings with customers. This philosophy helps justify the manipulation of trees by man in the urban setting (sure to be a best seller). This is a lead in to the manipulation of trees by man in the natural setting: justified of criminal (later). Urban settings are set up around existing trees, or trees are planted around urban